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A MEMOIR

OF

Gen. Christopher Gadsden,

READ BEFORE THE

South Carolina Historical Society,

By F. A. PORCHER,

PRESIDENT SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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Memoir of Gen. Christopher Gadsden.

As I pass in review the history of South Carolina and the illustrious men whose precepts, but still more whose examples made her what she was, I have always regarded Christopher Gadsden as one of the noblest of that noble band. His was the stern virtue which we were long taught to believe, characterized the ancient Spartan, tempered by the mild influences of the modern Christian. He was perhaps, what in our degenerate days would be called an impracticable man; that is, a man who could not bend from the dictate of principle to that of policy, and could therefore, be neither a good party leader, nor even a good party man. He followed always the impulse of incorruptible honesty, and was the impersonation of the most exalted chivalry. Fear and favor were alike foreign to his nature. He respected himself, and reverenced his Creator. Duty had no more obedient follower; truth no more devoted servant. Enthusiastic even to rashness in the cause of American Independence, his capacious heart beat as keenly for the wrongs of Massachusetts as for the insults to Carolina. He served his whole country with his whole heart, and when he died and his remains were committed to the keeping of his mother earth, she closed upon the noblest heart that ever beat with love for his country's virtues, or bled at witnessing the outrages which were heaped upon her devoted bosom.

More than seventy years have passed since he was removed from the sight of man, and few memorials are left to record his acts. A meagre account of his life is to be found in the chapter of biographical notices in Ramsay's History of South Carolina, and tradition has preserved a few anecdotes. In essaying at this time to trace the history of his life, I cannot promise to add anything new. I can incorporate into the memoir some of the anecdotes, and a fortunate chance has put me in possession of some letters which shed a bright, but a transient light upon a portion of his history. While in this Centennial year men are everywhere celebrating the praises of the dead of old times, no fitter theme can be selected for Charleston than Christopher Gadsden, and in the humble hope of reviving his memory, I offer to the Historical Society this contribution to the history of our State, as exemplified in the life of one of her illustrious sons.

Christopher Gadsden was born in Charlestown, in 1724. His father was Thomas Gadsden, a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and the King's Collector for the Port of Charleston.

Sent to England for instruction, he received a classical education, to which he subsequently added a knowledge of some of the oriental tongues. Returning from England as a passenger on board a King's ship, the purser died, and Mr. Gadsden was appointed to take his place, and continued to hold it for about two years. He then left the service and devoted himself to mercantile life, which he followed with great success in Charleston. Like many other merchants of this time and place, he was also engaged in the occupation of a planter. It was whilst engaged in these pursuits that he constructed the wharf which still bears his name. This kind of architecture seems to have pleased him, and to have called out his mechanical powers. In 1776, when Gen. Lee insisted on the necessity of having a bridge from Sullivan's Island to Haddrell's Point, so as to furnish an escape for the troops under Moultrie and Thompson in case of disaster, Mr. Gadsden, then Colonel Gadsden, in command at Fort Johnson, undertook the work, and from his own resources and his own money, in a very few days, completed the desired work.

In 1759 when Governor Lyttleton made his expedition against the Cherokees, there was not a single field piece mounted in all Carolina. Mr. Gadsden, who was a member of the Legislature, obtained the passage of an act for raising a company of artillery. He was appointed the Captain of this company, and at the head of it, accompanied the Governor into the Indian territory. This was the origin of what, after many changes and enlargements, was afterwards known as the Ancient Battallion of Artillery.

It is well-known that the unwise conduct of Governor Lyttelton resulted in a peace so hollow, that at the very moment that the people of Charleston were giving him the honors of a triumphal entry on his return, hostilities more frightful than ever were recommenced in the interior. In 1761 a well ordered expedition, commanded by Colonel Grant, of the regular army, with a detachment of British troops, aided by the South Carolina militia under Colonel Middleton, effectually subdued the turbulent Cherokees and gave peace to the country. I am not able to find Mr. Gadsden's name among the officers of this expedition. In Colonel Middleton's subordinates were Moultrie, Marion and Pinckney, who afterwards distinguished themselves in the war of

the Revolution. It is more than likely that the artillery company was then under the command of its founder.

On a careful revision of the history of the country before the outbreak of the war of the Revolution, it would seem that two causes were at work in the several colonies which harmonized with each other, and brought the North and South to act together. The question of taxation as such taken by itself was not sufficient to justify war, for surely, never was a people in Christendom so little disturbed by the tax collector. It is true that the conduct of our ancestors has been put on the lofty ground of principle. It was not the amount actually involved, but the possibilities of the future which guided our statesmen. I doubt whether a prosperous people would ever exercise so much self-denial as to hazard their prosperity because of a transient, and at the worst, rather vexatious stretch of power. The canses lay deeper than in this apparently lofty principle, and it pleased Providence to afflict England at that critical moment with an obstinate and conceited King and vain and unwise Ministers. Had common sense governed the counsels of England, the epoch of colonial independence might have been indefinitely deferred.

England was using her colonies for her own purposes, and the fostering of her own industry. In the Northern colonies she saw not only possible, but actual rivals in her own peculiar line of industry, and her jealousy was clearly shown by an order which limited the number of apprentices that any master workman in the colonies might entertain. The people of New England therefore had real causes of complaint against the mother country, and the British Government acted with consummate folly, when by the irritating and vexatious Writs of Assistance, followed by the greed of petty gain which proposed to raise a revenue by a tax on stamped paper, they gave the colonists a plausible ground for resisting both the tax and the harassing and vexatious restrictions which had restrained their social and industrial growth.

At the South the case was different, their productions fed the commerce of England and soon were even encouraged by bounties. The restrictions on trade and industry were uncared for, because they conflicted with no priyate interests. South Carolina in particular was a pet of the mother country. In 1773 Josiah Quincey, of Boston, visited Charlestown and saw commercial activity, wealth and magnificence, which he did not believe to exist in America. In this harbor were upwards of three hundred and fifty vessels of merchants. The hospitality which he largely enjoyed, showed in every house luxury and wealth such as he had never conceived. At a concert of the St. Cecilia Society he saw upwards of two hundred and fifty ladies. The music ot the concert was ravishing. Three members of the permanent band were employed at a salary of five hundred guineas a year, and another musician was occasionally employed at fifty guineas a month, and the people who enjoyed the means of indulging in such luxuries were going to hazard the loss of all for a petty tax on stamped paper, and a tax upon tea, a commodity probably unknown to nine-tenths of the people of the colony. But there was another cause at work, one perhaps more potent over the actions of men, which co-operated with the tax and fanned the flame of resistance, in fact gave energy and vitality to the tax; this was the habitual contempt with which American gentlemen were treated whenever they had official intercourse with British officers, both civil and military.

An order in council respecting the rank of American military officers was considered so outrageous to all manly self-respect, that Washington, who had struck the first blow in the great war known as the seven year's war, threw up his commission in disgust. If he served with Braddock it was only as a volunteer. Braddock had the good sense to value the presence of such a man on his expedition, and earnestly solicited his company as a volunteer. It was his misfortune that illness prevented the volunteer from joining him until it was too late to save him. Colonel Middleton, of South Carolina, was hardly persuaded by Governer Bull to take service under Colonel Grant in the Cherokee war; and the Governor, himself a Carolinian, knowing oy experience the insolent temper of the British officials, gave Colonel Middleton the extraordinary power of resigning his commission whenever he should please. It would be an unnecessary digression to dwell longer on that history here.

This spirit of insolence was most offensively manifested by Governor Thomas Boone to the whole Legislature of South Carolina, and Mr. Gadsden was, accidentally, an interested party in the transaction.

It had pleased Governor Boone to recommend an alteration of the election laws of the provinces. The Assembly not agreeing with the views of the Governor, made no change in the law. During the session, sometime after the organization of the House, Mr. Gadsden presented himself for qualification as a member for St. Paul's. After his credentials were approved by the Assembly, he was, according to an old custom, sent to the Governor to take before him what was called the State oaths, viz: an oath of allegience to the King, and an oath abjuring all cognizance of the right of the Stuart family. When he presented himself before the Governor, the latter not only refused to recognize him on account of the invalidity of his election, but dissolved the Commons House of Assembly for contumacy.

In thus determining against the validity of Mr. Gadsden's election, Governor Boone violated all parliamentary law, and established a personal despotism. Wherever a representative body is known to the law, it is invariably the final judge of

the qualification of its members. In the next Assembly, which met in December of that year, 1762, Mr. Gadsden was again a member. The Assembly immediately protested against the illegality of the late dissolution, and as the Governor would make no concessions, they declared that they would transact no business with him until he should concede the just claims of the House; and this state of defiant hostility continued for two years, until Governor Boone, wearied with the contest, left the province and went home.

During this suspension of legislative business he gave several exhibitions of petty and childish insolence which must have made a deep impression on a high-toned, generous and manly people. During this session, Sir John Colleton presented himself and claimed his seat. After his credentials were verified he was sent to the Governor to take the State oaths, accompanied by Christopher Gadsden and William Moultrie, who were sent according to an old custom, first to certify to the Governor that the candidate had been duly elected, and then to certify to the House that they had witnessed the administering of the oaths to the new member. Governor Boone demanded of Messrs. Gadsden and Moultrie what was their business there, and on being informed in what capacity they were there, replied that the Assembly had no right to intrude visitors upon him, rang the bell, and ordered the servant who answered it to conduct these gentlemen out of his house. Sir John Colleton was stopped, and, it is to be supposed, took the oaths. The indignation of the Assembly at this outrage offered to them through their members may be conceived. At first they refused to permit Colleton to take his seat, inasmuch as none of their members had seen him take the oaths. They relented, however, so far as to permit him to testify in his own case. Some time afterwards, when Sir John Colleton and Mr. Parsons were sent to attend a new member for the same purpose, the Governer repeated the insult, with an additional outrage. He refused the testimony of these gentlemen, as to the election of the new member, saying that he would examine the roll and judge for himself.

Thus, now, were gentlemen, representatives of the people, who might be reasonably supposed to represent the most refined class of the people, rudely dismissed from the Governor's house, and their testimony refused as untrustworthy. Is it surprising that such gentlemen should eagerly catch at any opportunity for revenge which offered itself? And shall we be thought to diminish the lustre of their fame, when we impute to wounded pride the bold determination which they not long afterwards made to sever themselves entirely from a Government which could with impunity thus recklessly insult them?

Whilst the petty and childish insults of Governor Boone were still rankling in the hearts of these gentlemen, the British Government unwisely gave them a palpable cause of complaint by the passage of the stamp act. The colonies were greatly excited by the passage of this act, and the ferment exhibited itself in several of the legislatures. The General Court of Massachusetts, in June, 1765, issued a circular letter to the several colonies, inviting them to meet each other by their deputies in New York, in the month of October following. In July the letter was discussed before the House of Assembly. After a long discussion, in which the call was supported by Mr. Rutledge, the subject was referred to a committee of which Mr. Gadsden was chairman. The committee reported in favor of the proposed Congress, and Christopher Gadsden, John Rutledge and Thomas Lynch, Sen., were elected to represent the Colony. This action of the Assembly, Mr. Bancroft regards as the founding of the American Union by South Carolina. "Massachusetts, he says, sounded the trumpet, but to South Carolina is it owing that it was attended to. Had it not been for South Carolina, no Congress would then have happened. When we count up those who above others, contributed to the great result, we are to name the inspired madman James Otis, and the great statesman, the magnanimous, unwavering, faultless lover of his country, Christopher Gadsden." These are the words of Bancroft. The measure was supported by the eloquence of Rutledge, but it was the zeal of Gadsden, which gave animation to the party of existence. In a letter written thirteen years afterwards to Wm. Henry Drayton, he says: "No man in America ever strove more (and more successfully) first to bring about a Congress in 1765, and then to support it ever afterwards than myself." Northern writers are disposed, I know not why, to pass over the services of Rutledge, and ascribe merit in preference to any other claimant. I believe, however, that in this case, but bare justice has been done to Mr. Gadsden. There was at that time this difference between his position and that of Mr. Rutledge; the latter was earnest in hoping for a redress of grievances; the former, even then looked forward to a severance of the tie which bound the colonies to the parent State.

The Congress of 1765 did little besides making the several parts of America known to each other. Two of the delegates of South Carolina, Mr. Lynch and Mr. Rutledge, were at the head respectively of the committees to address, the one, the House of Lords, the other, the Commons of England. Here again, Mr. Gadsden gave an exhibition of his stubborn consistency. As a subject of the King, he would address him on the subject of the grievances of the people, but he would stoop to no petition to either House of Parliament. "The House of Commons, he said, refused to receive the addresses of the Colonies, when the matter was pending; besides, we hold our rights neither from them nor from the Lords," but he was induced at last to

withdraw his opposition, for, said he, union is most certainly all in all.

It is known that if the action of the Congress was inoperative, the sturdy opposition of the people caused the repeal of the Stamp Act. From this time until the next Congress, in 1774, we find nothing to record of Mr. Gadsden. That he was diligently engaged in his private business we know, and also that he was generally a member of the Commons House of Assembly. In 1773, a very intelligent gentleman from Boston, Josiah Quincy, saw him one day in the House of Commons, and recorded a few words of a speech which is worth preserving as a photograph memorial of the man. In his journal, of March 19th, 1773, Mr. Quincey says: "Spent all the morning in hearing the debates of the House; had an opportunity of hearing the best speakers of the Province. T. Lynch, Esq., spoke like a man of sense and a patriot, with dignity, fire, and laconism. Mr. Gadsden was plain, blunt, hot and incorrect, though very sensible. In the course of the debate he used these very singular expressions for a member of Parliament, 'And, Mr. Speaker, if the Governor and Council don't see fit to fall in with us, I say let the general duty law, and all, go to the devil, sir, and we go about our business.'" It is but a glimpse of the earnest man, —but it reveals a world of character—he was very unparliamentary, but he was very much in earnest.

We will not repeat the oft-told story of British taxation and American resistance. You remember that a scheme was cunningly devised by which the people would be enticed to drink their tea and pay the obnoxious duty. Alarmed at the prospect of seeing a whole people recreant to their pledges by the allurement of cheap tea, the leaders of the revolutionary movement organized resistance throughout the country against this insidious measure. In many places, in this city among others, the tea was openly put away for destruction. In Boston a party of disguised men went by night to the wharf where the tea laden vessels were lying, took out the accursed thing and cast it into the sea. The open and undisguised resistance met with no rebuke; but as all attempts to discover the Boston rioters were baffled, the ministry lost their temper, and, in an unguarded moment, annulled the charter of Massachusetts, and closed the port of Boston, making all commerce with that city a punishable offence.

This high handed act of oppressive vengeance acted through the whole country like an electric spark. All felt that the cause of disfranchised Massachusetts was the common cause. At the call of New York a Congress of the Colonies met in Philadelphia, in September, 1774. The Representatives from South Carolina were chosen by a general vote of the citizens. The first measure of resistence which suggested itself was a general non-importation and non-exportation agreement. This was opposed by the mercantile interest generally, and two sets of candidates were presented to the voters. Representatives of each were elected, Mr. Gadsden, Thomas Lynch, and Edward Rutledge, representing the extreme party; Henry Middleton, and John Rutledge, the moderate party. Mr. Gadsden and J. Rutledge were respectively the representatives, the first of the extreme party for resistance, the latter long continued to hope for a restoration of the old pleasant relations with England by a redress of greivances. The former was even before this time, anxious for independence, the latter came very slowly and very reluctantly into the measure. As the delegates elected represented the two parties, it was agreed that no motion or resolution of the Congress should be binding upon the colony, unless it was agreed to by the deputies of the colony. They went to the Congress unpledged, uninstructed. The people had perfect faith in their patriotism and their wisdom.

It was desired to give the delegates an official sanction by legislative action; but Gov. Bull had always kept a strict eye over the House of Assembly, and invariably prorogued it whenever he thought it was treading on dangerous ground. On the present occasion it had been prorogued to the second of August. It was an old custom of the House to meet at 10 o'clock, but now all business had been secretly arranged, and at 8 o'clock the members were in their seats; a message was sent to the Governor, to inform him of their organization, and they instantly adopted two resolutions, one approving and confirming the election of the five gentlemen whom the people had chosen, and another providing for the expense of their voyage. The Governor, informed of the unusal meeting of the House, instantly sent for them to prorogue them. But he was too late. In less than half an hour the House had met, resolved, and was prorogued.

In this Congress we find Mr. Gadsden always acting with those who were foremost in leading on the revolution. Nay, he may be said to have been the foremost. Fancying that war was inevitable he wished to secure to his country all the advantages possible, and he urged upon the Congress the expediency of attacking Gen. Gage in Boston at once and defeating him before he could obtain reinforcements. He was described by some of the members as "it possible, worse than ever; more violent, more wrong-headed." The non-importation and non exportation agreement was passed, with an exception in favor of Carolina rice. Mr. Rutledge gave good and satisfactory reasons for this exception, but Mr. Gadsden stood alone in his opposition to it, and even on his return home made efforts to have the exception rescinded. Interest and expediency were powerless with him when principle was involved.

When the delegates returned home the subject of the exception of rice from the non-intercourse agreement was discussed, and Mr. Gadsden earnestly moved that

the exception be repealed. But Mr. Rutledge insisted that the exception was the only means by which the North and the South could be placed on an equality of suffering in the non-intercourse measure of resistence. It is, perhaps on account of his speech on that occasion that he has ever since been made the object of relentless criticism by a certain party at the North.

He said "that he was in favor of immediate non-intercourse, but the Congress, in their wisdom, had postponed it until the following September. That the Northern trade would be but little affected by the association, and he saw no reason why our's should be ruined. It was evident, he said, that the Colonies were less intent to annoy the mother country in the matter of trade, than to preserve their own trade; so he thought it but justice to his constituents to preserve to them their trade as entire as possible." It is very remarkable that this language should have been used respecting the different positions of the North and the South, not only by those who were founding the Union, but at the very moment the work of Union was going on.

The exception was retained by the Assembly, but Mr. Gadsden, though overruled in this matter, does not seem to have lost the confidence of his constituents. He and Mr. Rutledge were both returned to the Congress of 1775.

Before that Congress met, the revolutionary war had commenced in the skirmish at Lexington, and the Provincial Congress immediately set about organizing the military force of the province. In pursuance of this organization, Mr. Gadsden was elected Colonel of the First Regiment of Foot, and William Moultrie of the Second. Both these gentlemen had seen service in the Cherokee war, and though elected on the same day, Colonel Gadsden was the senior of Colonel Moultrie, and on his return home to serve his country in the army, he assumed the command of all the forces of the province. It appears by a note in Moultrie's Memoirs that he assumed the command in February, 1776.

In March, of that year, it was found absolutely necessary to establish civil government in South Carolina; the Provincial Congress, therefore, adopted a Provisional Constitution, under which John Rutledge was elected President of South Carolina. It was thus that the call of the citizens for their services at home, deprived Gadsden and Rutledge, her two most eminent citizens, of the distinction of enrolling their names among the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Early in June, General Charles Lee arrived in Charleston, and assumed the general direction of military affairs. Colonel Gadsden's post was at Fort Johnson. Colonel Moultrie was stationed at a point on Sullivan's Island, which commanded the entrance into the harbor, and Colonel Thompson at the northeast of the Island, to prevent the landing of troops from Long Island. It is well known that General Lee looked upon the tenure of Sullivan's Island as a desperate measure, and but for the obstinacy of President Rutledge, he would have drawn off the troops. He insisted upon the necessity of a bridge across the north channel, so that the troops might retreat to the main land if necessary. This work was accomplished at his own expense, by Colonel Gadsden. The successful defense of the Island, by Colonel Moultrie and Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, depriyed Colonel Gadsden of any participatton in the honors of the 28th of June. During the calm which followed the storm of war, we have little to record. Both Colonels were soon afterwards taken into the Continental service and commissioned as Brigadier-Generals. In August, 1777, General Gadsden resigned his commission and served his country afterwards entirely in civil life.

The successful defence of the island by Colonel Moultrie and Lieutenant-Colonel Thompson, deprived Colonel Gadsden of any participation in the honors of the 28th June. During the action which followed the storm of war we have little to record. Both colonels were soon afterwards taken into the Continental service, and commissioned as brigadier-generals. In August, 1777, General Gadsden resigned his commission and served his country afterwards entirely in civil life.

The accidental preservation and discovery of a small letter-book shed a ray of light upon both his own history and that of the State during the years 1777 and 1778, and with this precious relic before one it is very hard to resist the temptation to make full copies of his letters.

The resignation of General Gadsden and the duel which arose out of it between him and General Howe, is an episode in the lives of both these gentlemen, of so remarkable a character, that one who undertakes to give the history of General Gadsden's life can scarcely refuse to narrate it. With every disposition to see General Gadsden always right, I am constrained to say that in this matter he appears to me to have been wrong. But he was, if I may so express myself, gloriously wrong. In the annals of private warfare there was never exhibited such pure chivalry, such perfect devotion to the point of honor as was shown by him on this occasion. Major Andre, who seems to have had a keen sense of humour, amused himself and the public by a humorous ballad on the occasion of the duel; but though the British officer laughed, he could not but show the profound respect with which he was inspired by the high and gallant bearing of the two gentlemen who furnished food for his mirth. The account of the meeting deserves to be studied by those persons who in these modern times have converted the chivalrous settlement of the point of honor into a barbarous and sanguinary riot.

The origin of the dispute lay in the unsettled relations between the States and the Congress. When General Lee

arrived in Charleston, in June, 1776, the general direction of military affairs was committed to him, but the Executive relinquished none of his rights as commander-in Chief. Thus President Rutledge wrote to General Moultrie, "General Lee wishes you to evacuate the fort. You will not, without an order from me, and I would sooner cut off my right hand than write one."

Not long after the action of fort Moultrie, General Lee left Charleston for his mad expedition against Florida. He had Howe and Moultrie in his army. Colonel Gadsden was probably left in defence of the city. Lee had not proceeded further than Savannah when an express called him to join Washington at the North; he obeyed the order, went North, and immediately entered upon that course of capricious opposition to the Commander-in-Chief which resulted in his rediculous capture by a scouting party of the British army. On his return through Charleston he left General Moore in command, with a body of North Carolina troops. Moore was succeeded by Nash, and on his departure General Howe, the senior officer, assumed the command. He was from North Carolina, and by his own account well connected in both the Carolinas. On the 29th October, 1776, he published in orders the promotion of Colonels Gadsden and Moultrie to the rank of Brigadier-General, and assigned to them their respective commands, that of General Gadsden being on Sullivan's Island. On the 23d August, 1777, General Gadsden resigned his commission into the hands of General Howe. Unfortunately, while General Gadsden has preserved for us General Howe's report of the affair, he did not take the same pains to preserve his reply to General Howe. He had a profound reverence for the Congress, and it was this reverence which induced him to send his resignation to General Howe, and not as many other aggrieved officers had done—directly to Congress. He supposed that some inquiry would be made by the Congress as to the cause of his resignation, and he was hurt at its being received without any comment. As he was in a manner the originator of the Congress, he felt that his resignation ought not to have been accepted without his being allowed an opportunity of vindicating himself. He wrote often and confidentially to his friend Wm. Henry Drayton, and through him received in June, 1778, a copy of Howe's letter to Congress. To this letter the General replied in a letter dated July 4, to Wm. Henry Drayton, a copy of which was sent to General Howe. This letter, in his subsequent correspondence, he refers to continually as a Public letter, and perhaps it was because he so considered it, that he took no pains to preserve it. Unfortunately, Mr. Drayton did not so consider it, and made no effort to publish it among the members of Congress. This letter was the cause of the duel between the two Generals.

General Howe says that about four months before the date of his letter, that is about May 1, after he had been more than six months in undisputed command of this post, General Gadsden desired to know by what right he commanded, and claimed that he himself was the natural commander in South Carolina. General Howe explained to him his right, and showed the error into which General Gadsden had fallen respecting conflicting claims of right. On the request of the latter that the matter be referred to Congress, General Howe replied that as he had no doubt respecting his own right he would express none, but if the other desired it he would communicate these doubts to Congress as his, and this was assented to. At a subsequent interview a few days afterward General Howe was led to believe that General Gadsden was now satisfied as to his right, and the letter was not written. One day in August they met at the house of President Lowndes, and General Gadsden inquired whether the letter had been written as had been agreed, and on General Howe replying in the negative and giving his reasons for not having done it, he said that the matter should be brought before the House of Assembly. A motion was accordingly made shortly after by Wm. Henry Drayton, to inquire into the nature of Gen. Howe's command in this State. The motion was, in my opinion, very properly reflected, and Gen. Gadsden immediately resigned his commission into Gen. Howe's hands. This is a brief of Gen. Howe's letter, and I do not believe there was any statement in it, which Gen. Gadsden contradicted. The rest of the story shall be told in his own words:

"On the 11th of August, I received by the General's Aide-de-Camp, a long expostulatory letter, dated two days before, with demand for satisfaction at the close, unless I made him reparation for the expressions I had made use of, relative to him in my letter of the 4th of July. I wrote for answer next morning, that, I was ready to give him any satisfaction he thought proper, when and where he pleased. That I thought him the aggressor in having wrote such an unnecessary detail of that matter in it, omitting my principal objection, and especially for not letting me, whom it so nearly concerned, have a copy of it, and that he had nobody to blame but himself—that I never saw his detail, which had such immediate effect, for ten months after the date of it. Three letters from him and two from me passed before the matter came to a point. In his, he gave me assurance that he did not mean in anything he said to reflect upon or injure me, and as to the breach of promise I accused him of, he declared he really understood me as he had set forth, so that if there was a fault, his understanding and not his integrity was to blame; and had he imagined I wished to see his letter, he should most cheerfully have sent it to me; that he had not the least wish to conceal it from me. My friends, Col. Elliott and Col. Horry, who were the only persons that had the least hint of this affair from me, seemed to

think this a great concession, and required some notice or apology on my side, and our friend Col. Pinckney, who was the General's second, appeared to be of the same opinion. But I, looking upon it only as private and personal to me; and whereas the expressions of me, he particularly referred to, (ot my letter to you) related to the manner of a public act, his getting as it seemed to me, in command here, and as I did not see how it was possible with any kind of propriety or adherance to truth, to abstract the private letter from the public, I determined to make no concession, but to meet him in any manner he pleased. Accordingly we met on the 30th, and were placed at the distance of eight very small paces. As the General demanded satisfaction of me, and I had already taken mine by exposing his letter with my observations thereon, I was determined to receive his fire, which I accordingly did—after some time, fired my pistol broad off, and called him to fire again, which he declined. The matter thus being over, I thought the apology, or rather the notice my friends seemed to think due on his concessions, would come in with propriety, I thereofore told him that though I might perhaps mention the matter again, yet he might be assured that I shall never *in future*, make use of any harsh exposures concerning him."

This narration, compiled from original sources, shows that Dr. Johnson was in error in stating in his Traditions of the Revolution that the duel arose out of strictures by Gen. Gadsden of Howe's conduct of the Florida expedition. I will supplement this account of the matter with an extract from the South Carolinian and American General Gazette, dated Charleston, September 3, 1778. This report needs no comment from us, and I would commend it to the attentive perusal of those gentlemen who, in modern times, have lost sight of the high principle involved in the duel, and converted it into a means of blood thirsty revenge:

"After the generals met and courteously saluted each other, General Howe desired his second to acquaint his friends, in case he should fall, that it was his earnest request they should not prosecute General Gadsden beyond the formality of a trial, and General Gadsden desired both the seconds to acquaint his friends, in case he should fall, that he entirely forgave General Howe, and earnestly begged them not to prosecute him; and he particularly enjoined Colonel Pinckney to charge his son not to intermeddle in the affair at all. General Howe's second then stepped off the distance fixed upon by him and Colonel Elliott—eight short paces—and the Generals being placed, Colonel Ellliott said: Gentlemen, we have marked out your distance, and leave you to act as you please, not doubting but that, as this is an affair of honor, you will act consistently with the strictest rules of honor. General Howe then said to General Gadsden, 'Fire, sir.' General Gadsden said, 'Do you fire first.' General Howe replies, 'We will both fire together.' General Gadsden made no answer, but both presented. There was a pause for a few seconds, and General Howe lowered his pistol and said, with a smile, 'Why won't you fire, General Gadsden?' General Gadsden replied, 'You brought me out, General Howe, to this ball-play, and ought to begin the entertainment.' General Howe fired and missed. General Gadsden, after a short interval, fired his pistol over his left arm, about at right angles from General Howe, and then called out to General Howe to fire again. General Howe smiled, and at the same time dropping his hand, with the pistol in it, said, 'No, General Gadsden, I cannot, after this.' General Gadsden's second said he was glad to see so much honor in the General; that he did not think General Gadsden could have made a handsomer apology, or General Howe have shown a higher sense of honor than in acting as he had done. Then General Gadsden went up to him and said: 'Now, General Howe, I will mention to you what I could not do before, as my letter was a public one, and the words contained in it seemed to me proper; and as your's was a private one, the parts in it which, in the opinion of my friends, left an opening for an apology, I could not take notice of; but I told my friend in the carriage, before I came on the ground that I intended to receive your fire; and though I may, perhaps, talk this matter over again, I assure you I shall never in future make use of any harsh expressions concerning you.' General Howe said that it was very agreeable to him that the matter terminated in this way, and he was happy that he had missed him. General Gadsden's second said he hoped now the differences that had occasioned this duel might now subside and be left on that spot. The Generals, then, in token of this reconciliation, shook hands and parted."

The letters which have been my guide in the history of this duel show General Gadsden during the same year as a magistrate; and we still find the same indomitable courage in the discharge of duty, the same high regard for principle, and the same respect for law and authority which marked every incident of his life.

It must be remembered that in March, 1776, the Provincial Congress established a provisional constitution for the government of the province during the continuation of the unhappy disputes with the parent country. Under this constitution John Rutledge was elected President, and Henry Laurens Vice-President of South Carolina. In March, 1778 the Legislature enacted a new constitution, and submitted it to the President for his approval. Mr. Rutlege refused to approve of it, and returned it to the Legislature with his reasons. It is out of our province to examine these reasons. Some cavillers have inferred from a part of his speech that he still hoped for a reconciliation

with Britain. Of this calumny his subsequent history is a sufficient refutation. In order that the Legislature might have free liberty of action, his veto message contained, also, his resignation. As the Vice-President, Mr. Laurens, was, at that time, President of the Continental Congress, it was necessary to elect entirely new executive officers. Mr. Rawlins Lowndes was elected President, and General Gadsden Vice-President, and ex-officio chairman of the Privy Council. I said at the outset that he must have been a bad party man. Here we have a little proof of it from his own pen. In one of his letters to Mr. Drayton he asserts that this honor was conferred upon him for the purpose of getting rid of him at future meetings of the House of Assembly, and to make him ineligible to the next. He says: "I saw plainly their views, but could not avoid accepting without throwing the State into confusion. But this I did not do without letting them know I plainly perceived their motives,"

Towards the end of March, 1778, the Legislature had passed an ordinance exacting an oath of fidelity and allegience, imposing severe penalties upon those who should refuse or neglect to take it by a certain day. Like all severe acts, it was imperfectly executed. The time had expired, and there were many delinquents. At the suggestion of the General Congress and the Privy Council, President Lowndes issued a proclamation to extend the time for taking the oath. This act of indulgence gave rise to scenes which betrayed the weakness of the Government, and the existence in the city of a power superior to the law. Whether the proclamation was printed I know not. I do not find it in the gazettes of the day, but there is extant a letter from Governor Gadsden, who in consequence of the illness and domestic affliction of Mr. Lowndes, was discharging Executive business to Mr. Timothy, making an earnest appeal to him to print fifty copies. This letter savours more of a petition asking a favor than the order of a Magistrate for the performance of work. The rest of the story is best told in General Gadsden's own words: "It, (the proclamation) was scarcely got into the Sheriff's hands, before some myrmidons alarmed the town. We were setting up a proclamation against law—going to ruin their liberties—and what not? The proclamation, I believe, was never read. A deputation was sent to the President, of Dr. Budd, and some others. The proclamation was returned to him in my presence, which of itself is insult enough, but besides that, the spokesman, Ward, told the President that he thought the people were right, and that he would lose the last drop of his blood to support them. This I thought so high an insult that I immediately began with Ward, sarcastically applauded his heroism and great exertions for the public good. In return he told me I was a madman, but first took care to sneak out of my reach, however. Had he not, I should have done nothing more, as I was prepared—than what I did—laugh in his face.

The President did all that he could do, but to no purpose. A meeting was called in the evening, Dr. Budd put in the chair, every press prohibited from printing the proclamation, and the magistrates deterred from granting certificates to the penitent. At this crisis, I, Don Quixote Secundus, who had never acted the magistrate before, gave out publicly that I would give the oath of fidelity, and certificates to all applicants by the 10th, and accordingly did to many. I was in the midst of the people when I found them chiefly a mere mob, with here and there some who ought not to have been, and I was sorry to see there; and had reason to suspect that day much negative impulse. I told them I advised the measure, and that they should put a halter around my neck and hang me at once if they thought it wrong. That they had a constitutional remedy. They might impeach the President and Council if they had acted improperly, and that they had better do that. But all to no purpose. In my opinion, if they were not set on, the old leven was at heart, sorry for it."

General Gadsden further on intimates that the parties engaged in the riotous opposition to the President were ashamed of their conduct. But certain it is, that the President was successfully resisted by a mob, and the proclamation was not published. The truth was that the people were never satisfied with the resignation of President Rutledge, and their feelings were shown in factious opposition to his successor. In September the Legislature met, and President Lowndes sent in his message an account of the riots in opposition to his proclamation. The House of Assembly seemed to be unwilling to deal with the subject, and after the lapse of a month, referred it to the consideration of the next House, that is, to one which, according to the constitution, would be be elected in the following January. Whereupon General Gadsden wrote the following letter to the Hon. Thomas Bee, Speaker of the Commons House of Assembly, October 5, 1778:

"Dear Sir: The honorable House, thinking proper, after having had his Excellency the President's message, relative to his proclamation of the 5th June, and the outrageous treatment it met with from a part of the people of Charleston, a month before them, to postpone the matter to the next House, in parliamentary language, '*ad Greeas Calendas*, considering the part I acted, in earnestly advising that step, in which I am conscious of having done nothing improper, I submit it to the House, how they think I must feel, under such, at least negative censure, especially after the deliberately gross treatment the Executive received from a body of men, mentioned in no part of the constitution, as I can recollect, who call themselves the Hint club.

The contemptible, surprising and useless situation with regard to the public, I find myself reduced to, upon this oc-

casion, lays me under the necessity of entreating you to request the honorable House, for the public sake as well as my own, to deliver me from it by accepting my resignation as Vice-President. It may not be proper for me, perhaps, to let my feelings carry me further; am therefore resigned to stop here, if sir, you think my particular reasons following too free, or will give offense to the House, which I would be sorry to be thought capable of intending. But if you judge not, and the House will bear with the remonstrance of an old and faithful servant, I shall then be obliged to you to lay 'em before them."

The letter is very long, and must not be quoted at length. It fully justifies Mr. Quincy's discription of his style as plain, blunt, hot and incorrect, though very sensible. He begins by avowing himself the adviser of the proclamation, then shows the evil of mob law and its inevitable tendency to degrade and nullify the legitimate government. He refers casually as to a thing well known to the circumstances which led to his election as Vice-President and the reasons which induced him to accept it, and he concludes with this touching and manly defence of his whole life: "I have had, without asking or soliciting any man's vote, directly or indirectly, the honor to serve my country for many years in various stations, always totally devoted to that particular part occasionally alloted to me—never quitting it while the least hope remained of having that necessary support the station required. Zealous and attentive in all to the honor of the public and their nearest concerns; unbiased either by friend or foe—intimidated by none—constantly attending to my duty while a member of Assembly—making no promises, but always keeping myself disengaged upon every question for every officer whatever wanted for any department of the State or concerning any other matter of moment, 'till it came before the House, and then voted according to my own judgment for the good of the whole, always thinking it cowardly to leave the House on a division upon any question whatever, unless it merely concerned myself, or I really did not understand the terms it was put in. Seldom, upon making a motion, have I previously secured even a second, but more than this I always looked upon as caballing, warping men's judgments, and a kind of treason against, or at best pitifully and dirtily crimping for the State; and if I now towards the close of a long, disinterested and laborious service ask any favor, either of individuals or the public in general, let it be only to be looked upon as a citizen detesting licentiousness and totally devoted to the cause of equal constitutional liberty, religious and civil to all, governor and governed, and having not a desire, (and who never had) for himself and family in these respects, that he does not from the bottom of his soul wish for every honest man in the State, and indeed in all the world.

Believe me, sir, the exquisite feelings arising from a consciousness of having acted in this steady, uniform manner in public life, has made me more than ample amends for every neglect, every disagreeable circumstance it has occasioned through selfish, ambitious, arbitrary, and designing men whose private views have been occasionally thwarted thereby. I have served with pleasure under the President and witness to his indefatigable attention to the public interest, not only in his present, but in several other important stations on very trying occasions; have long and well known his honest, sensible heart and fixed attachments to the public good, feel extremely for his delicate situation, and most earnestly wish, for my country's sake, that he had that support he so much merited from every good and honest man in the State, and to which as a private citizen I am hopeful to contribute my mite. In a public station, as times go, I can afford none. Give leave to conclude, with declaring that had I not thus shown my public resentment in the strongest manner I am able, against the proceedings justly represented by the President in his message of the 3d of September, I should have ever thought myself accountable for all the riots and mobs throughout the State that may happen in consequence of that which happened in Charlestown, the 5th of June, and as having abetted the artful opposers and disturbers of the peace, by negatively at least, assisting them in their indirect, underhanded practicings in the weakest part of the Constitution, the present allowed disproportion of members in order to throw all into confusion, and when an opportunity serves, get the whole new modelled more to their *goat*, and as sacrificing the duty I owe as officer to the whole State, to the idle tickling of a momentary popularity with a too assuming small part."

Without pretending to decide the merits of the controversy between the President and Gen. Gadsden and the House of Assembly, I take pleasure in recording that the latter body was composed of gentlemen. Not only were they not aggrieved at the rebuke which the Vice-President administered to them, but they unanimously sent a deputation to entreat him to withdraw his resignation. An extract from a letter to Mr. Drayton will explain his conduct, and conclude the history of this affair: "The House met according to adjournment, very few members indeed; the President made a very proper and spirited representation of the behavior of the mob in Charleston on the 5th of June, which mob was ostensibly on account of his proclamation, but really (as I am verily persuaded) artfully stirred up and set a going by a cabal. The House, after having it before them a month, through the influence of the Town members, put it off to the next House. In the meantime the President and Privy Council are to put up with the insult. I was much afraid Mr. Lowndes

would have resigned, which would have put the State into great confusion, and would have given the party, who were hopeful that officers would not have been found to set the new Constitution a going, the utmost pleasure. The resignation of the Council would have done the same; as for my part, as Vice-President, and a new election so near at hand, I thought my resignation could be of little moment to the State, and at the same time thinking it would be of some good consequence that some part of the Executive should show a feeling upon so monstrous an insult as they received; I thought myself in a manner peculiarly called upon to do it, from my station, and accordingly wrote the within letter to the Speaker, which was laid before the House, who, I thought, would have accepted my resignation immediately. However, I was mistaken, for they did me the honor unanimously to send two members to desire I would continue. This I could not refuse, therefore still remain in *statu quo*, and am not without reason to think my letter has done some good that may appear in future."

In January, 1779, the Legislature met in pursuance of the provisions of the new Constitution. In the same month, John Rutledge was elected Governor and Thomas Bee Lieutenant-Governor. At what time Gen. Gadsden was elected to the latter office does not appear, but it was probably in 1780, when Thomas Bee was sent to Congress and the approach of the invading English army caused the Legislature to adjourn, after having conferred upon Governor Rutledge those extraordinary powers which have since given him the title of Dictator. It may be observed, in passing, that this extraordinary power, conferred by the Legislature, is a sufficient reply to those malignant cavillers who see in Rutledge's veto of the Constitution a longing to go back to British rule, and in his parley with General Prevost, in 1779, a treasonable attempt to effect the same object.

Whilst the siege of Charleston was going on, General Lincoln pressingly urged Governor Rutledge to leave the town with the whole of his Council, thinking that the civil authority of the State would be more advantageously executed in the country than in the besieged metropolis, and that thus the executive authority might be preserved, even if the Capital should fall—that the citizens in the country should not conceive themselves deserted in the hour of danger. In pursuance of this advice, Governor Rutledge left Charleston April 12, 1780, with three of the Privy Council. Lieutenant-Governor Gadsden, with the other five, remained, to await the issue of the siege. A month afterwards, May 12, Lincoln surrendered his army, and by the terms of capitulation, Lieutenant-Governor Gadsden, together with all others who held any civil authority, were held as prisoners of war on parole.

It is needless to say that General Gadsden, though a prisoner, was firm to the cause of independence. Though restrained by their paroles from doing anything injurious to the cause of His Britannic Majesty, yet the silent example of himself and others who fell with him, men who were revered by their fellow-citizens, had a powerful influence in restraining many from exchanging their paroles as prisoners for the protection and freedom of British subjects. After the unsuccessful attempt of General Gates to relieve the State, Lord Cornwallis regarded it as a conquered province, and utterly violated the terms of the capitulation. On the 27th August, General Gadsden, most of the civil officers of the State, and some others whose attachment to the cause of the Revolution was conspicuous, were taken, early in the morning, from their beds and their houses, and escorted by armed parties to the Exchange, whence they were sent to a guard ship, and a few days afterwards to St. Augustine.

This was a gross violation of the capitulation. General Moultrie, from his quarters in Christ Church Parish, whither he had been assigned on parole, wrote to Colonel Balfour to protest against the outrage; to which the commandant replied, that his letter was written in such exceptionable and unwarrantable terms that it should not be answered. Nothing daunted by this repulse, the General made another effort in behalf of the unfortunate prisoners, to which he received a verbal answer, that the commandant would do as he pleased with the prisoners, for the good of His Majesty's service, and not as General Moultrie pleases.

On their arrival at St. Augustine, the prisoners were offered the liberty of the town on their parole. This General Gadsden indignantly refused to give. "I gave my parole once," he said, "and it has been shamefully violated by the British Government; I shall not give another to people on whom no faith can be reposed." He was told that a dungeon would be the alternative. "Be it so," he answered, "I give no more paroles to British officers." The next day he was confined in a dungeon of the castle, were he remained forty-two weeks. A common soldier, honoring the invincible firmness of the hero, offered to supply him with light—for he was allowed no other light but that of day, as this was contrary to orders, the General refused to accept the offer. Among other objects to which he devoted his enforced leisure was the study of the Hebrew tongue, and he came out of the dungeon a more learned man than when he entered it.

British severity did not deny them books, but the prisoners were studiously kept misinformed respecting affairs at home. The prospects of America were brightening, but they were led to believe that ruin was hanging over them. They were threatened with being called upon to expiate the death of Major Andre. They patiently endured all threats and outrages, and not one sued for British protection.

After ten months of seclusion, General Gadsden was liberated and sent with his fellow-prisoners to Philadelphia. So

strictly had they been kept in ignorance of the progress of the war that it was not until they reached Philadelphia that they heard of Greene's successful campaigns after the disastrous defeat of Gates. Gen. Gadsden hastened home to assist in recovering South Carolina from the British, and was immediately elected a member of the Legislature, which met in Jacksonboro, 1782. Governor Rutledge, laid down his office before the Legislature, and Gen. Gadsden was elected to the vacant place. He declined the honor, however, saying:

"I have served you in a variety of stations for thirty years, and I would now cheerfully make one forlorn hope on an assault on the lines of Charleston, if it was probable that with the certain loss of my life you would be reinstated in your capital. What I can do for my country, I am willing to do. My sentiments for the American cause, from the Stamp Act downward, have never changed. I am still of opinion that it is the cause of liberty and of human nature. If my acceptance of the office of Governor would serve my country, though my administration would be attended with the loss of personal credit and reputation, I would cheerfully undertake it. The present times require the vigor and the activity of the prime of life; but I feel the increasing infirmities of age to such a degree that I am conscious I cannot serve you to advantage. I therefore beg that you would indulge me with the liberty of declining the arduous trust."

He was indulged in his request. But though he declined the office of Chief Magistrate, he continued to serve the State both in the Assembly and in the Council. Notwithstanding the long confinement which he had suffered in the castle of St. Augustine, and the immense loss of property which the war had caused him, he was one of the few who, in the Jacksonboro Legislatnre, opposed the bills for confiscating and amercing the estates of those who had opposed the revolution. In December of that year he had the satisfaction of witnessing the departure from Charleston of the British fleet and army, and the consequent restoration of the whole State to the government of her own citizens. From this time forward his life was devoted to private pursuits, except in two cases. In 1788 he was a member of the Convention which ratified the Constitution. To this object, all the aspirations of his life were devoted. He had in 1765 founded the American Union by his exertions in the Provincial Assembly, and he had the pleasure, twenty-three years afterwards, to assist in ratifying it by an act which he fondly hoped would make that Union perpetual. In 1790 he was a member of Convention which formed the new Constitution of the State. He was now sixty-six years of age, and he lived fifteen years longer a private citizen with the good old man's blessings—love, honor, obedience, troops of friends. In August, 1805, an accidental fall deprived him of life.

In compliance with the instructions contained in his Will, his body was deposited in the family cemetery, in the western church yard of St. Philip's, and the grave levelled—no stone marks the spot of his final resting place.

In reviewing the history of a country, we remember those only who have done deeds that fire the imagination of the historian. Brilliant talents dazzle for a day, and secure for their possessor the plaudits of contemporaries, but when time stills the echo of applause, the memory of the popular favorite passes away, and posterity regards his name with listless curiosity.

We cannot claim for the hero of our sketch the performance of any of those great actions which are among the landmarks of history, and outside of South Carolina his name is probably in the great catalogue of undistinguished celebrities who shone for a day, and then passed into oblivion. But in South Carolina he has a claim to our fond regard, not so much for what he did as for what he so largely helped to do. If, in the history of our country, the South, and South Carolina, has had an undue share of influence in guiding the political bark, it was the result, not of the brilliant talents, but of the solid character of her representatives. They were felt to be men who might be trusted; who had no selfish ends to carry; who had but one rule of action in both private and public life, and that was devotion to truth and to right. Men who act thus are representative men—a poor constituency can never send such men to represent them. They choose men like themselves.

A good public sentiment is formed by the influence of the men who stand at the head of society. As they direct, the masses think and act; and here is South Carolina largely indebted to Christopher Gadsden. He was the soul of honor. His youth and early manhood were spent where corruption in high places had reached its highest point in England; but his pure spirit shrank from contamination. He was the soul of integrity. The natural effect of the Revolution was to produce anarchy, and disobedience to law and authority. The wise spirit of Christopher Gadsden saw the danger and resisted it, and in his own person set the highest example of obedience. He was a living illustration of duty. It was not he alone that moulded public sentiment; no one man could do it; but he was foremost among those who were unconsciously engaged in that good and noble work, and to no one is more applicable the motto proposed by Major Gorden as his epitaph:

In difficillimis Reipublicæ temporibus urbem nunquam deserui, in prosperis nihil de publico delibaui; in desperatis nihil timui—[Cic.

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